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C O N F I D E N T I A L JAKARTA 000117

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [MARR](#) [ID](#)  
SUBJECT: ENGAGING WITH KOPASSUS UNIT 81

REF: A. STATE 2306  
[1](#)B. JAKARTA 109

Classified By: Ambassador Cameron R. Hume, reasons 1.4 (b and d)

[1](#)1. (C) President Yudhoyono (SBY) and other senior Indonesian officials have made it clear to us that SBY views the issue of Army Special Forces (KOPASSUS) training as a litmus test of the bilateral relationship and that he believes the March visit of President Obama will not be successful unless this issue is resolved in advance of the visit.

[1](#)2. (C) Based on the progress Indonesia's democratically elected government has made on military reform and accountability, there is now the prospect of a phased engagement with KOPASSUS Unit 81 (ref a). This phased engagement would entail strict adherence to Leahy vetting procedures, as is the case with all training undertaken by Mission. Embassy Jakarta strongly supports this proposal and suggests the Secretary raise this issue with Foreign Minister Natalegawa on the margins of the London Afghanistan Ministerial Conference (ref b).

[1](#)3. (C) Embassy Jakarta continues, with interlocutors at all levels, to stress the importance of reform, accountability, and transparency as the basis for dealing with KOPASSUS's history of human rights violations and as the principles that will allow any future engagement with KOPASSUS. Most recently, Defense Attache and Poloff made these points at a meeting with Defense Minister Purnomo Yusgiantoro on January [1](#)26.

[1](#)4. (SBU) KOPASSUS unit 81 was created in June 2001 under Army Chief of Staff order Kep/12/VI/2001 as part of overall KOPASSUS reform, when Groups 4 and 5 were dissolved and replaced with two new entities: the Special Forces Training Command and Unit 81. While the Unit's lineage is traced back to the similarly named Detachment 81 (which was itself dissolved in 1996 and replaced with Group 5), its mission, size, and personnel have changed. Unit 81's mission is narrowly focused on counterterrorism activities. It consists of two battalions and one detachment.  
HUME